

Prescription Drug Assistance Programs Available in Virginia

1. The Medicare-Approved Drug Discount Cards Program

According to the **Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003 (MMA)**, Medicare will include a prescription drug benefit starting in 2006. However, Congress recognized that people needed immediate help in paying for their medications, so the Act also created an interim **Medicare-Approved Drug Discount Cards Program**.

Enrollment in a Medicare-Approved Drug Discount Card Program is voluntary. As a general rule, you may choose to enroll in only one card program per year, and the card may only be used at a pharmacy that is in the card sponsor's network. You will need to decide which card program offers the most beneficial discount, based on the prescription medications you take, as well as any other insurance coverage that you may have.

Persons enrolling in Medicare will receive information about the discount drug card program in the mail. For in-depth information on eligibility criteria, the enrollment process, and the Medicare-approved drug discount cards that are available in each state, visit www.medicare.gov, or call **1-800-MEDICARE** (1-800-633-4227; TTY users call 1-877-486-2048).

The U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has prepared the following materials for your use. You can view them online, or request copies by telephone.

- **"The Facts about Upcoming New Benefits in Medicare"** - 8.5" x 11", 2 pages.
- **Medicare: Today's Issue (January 15, 2004) - "Health Savings Accounts for All"** - 8.5" x 11", 1 page.
- **Medicare: Today's Issue (January 16, 2004) - "The New Prescription Drug Benefit: Eligibility & Enrollment"** - 8.5" x 11", 1 page.

The following web sites also have information:

- **AARP-Latest Medicare News** - <http://www.aarp.org/prescriptiondrugs/informed>
- **American Geriatrics Society**
http://www.americangeriatrics.org/policy/medicare_info.shtml
- **Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)** - <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/>
- **Medicare** - <http://www.medicare.gov/MedicareReform/>
- **Medicare Drug Discount Card Guide** – <http://www.themedcard.info>
- **Medicare Rights Center** - <http://www.medicarerights.org/newlawframeset.html>
- **National Council on the Aging (NCOA)**-<http://www.ncoa.org/content.cfm?sectionID=214>

2. Prescription Drug Discount Programs offered by organizations other than drug-manufacturing companies.

Prescription drug discount programs are also offered by non-pharmaceutical organizations. Two examples of this type of program are **Needymeds.com** (<http://www.needymeds.com>), and **FreeMedicineFoundation.com** (<http://www.freemedicinefoundation.com>). You can find other discount card programs by using an Internet search engine (such as <http://www.google.com> or <http://www.yahoo.com>) and using the search term “prescription drugs.”

3. Generic Drugs

You may be able to save money by using generic drugs rather than brand-name drugs. When a drug company develops a new drug, they give it a brand-name and obtain a patent for it from the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA). The patent gives the drug company the exclusive right to make the brand-name drug for a certain period of time. This allows the drug manufacturer to earn back the money they invested in developing and testing the drug.

Once the patent expires, other drug companies can apply to the FDA to sell their version of the same drug. These versions are called generic drugs, and they are often less expensive than the original. If you are trying to save money on your prescriptions, you may want to consider talking with your doctor to see if the generic version of a drug would be all right for you to use.

All drugs sold in the United States must be approved by the FDA regardless of whether they are brand-name or generic, so consumers can be sure that the drugs they take have been approved by a federal agency. For more information on generic drugs, visit these web sites: listed below.

- **Blue Cross & Blue Shield: Generic Drugs: The Unadvertised Brand –**
(<http://www.theunadvertisedbrand.com/>)
- **U.S. Food & Drug Administration's Generic Drug Brochure -**
http://www.fda.gov/cder/consumerinfo/generic_equivalence.htm

4. Statewide Company-Sponsored Prescription Drug Assistance Programs

The card programs shown in the table below are **NOT** a part of Medicare's Drug Discount Cards Program. They are programs offered by drug companies as alternatives to the cards offered in the Medicare Drug Discount Cards Program.

* These cards are available at no charge, but only to Medicare recipients who do not already have a pharmacy benefit through private insurance or the Medicaid program.

Program	Contact	Eligibility	Benefit
AARP's MembeRx Choice® Program	To join by phone, call toll-free 1-800-456-2277 . To join online, visit: http://www.aarp-pharmacy.com/AARPnet/mc/mcdefault.aspx	Persons enrolling in MembeRx Choice® must be members of AARP, which requires that the person be 50 years of age or older, and pay an annual membership fee of \$12.50.	AARP members pay an annual fee of \$19.95 per year and receive discounts on more than 5,000 medications at pharmacies nationwide. Home delivery of medications via mail is also available if prescriptions are ordered from the AARP Mail Order Pharmacy.
GlaxoSmithKline Orange Card	Call 1-888-ORANGE6 (1-888-672-6436) toll-free to receive an application form, or visit their web site at: http://us.gsk.com/card/index.htm	Annual income - \$30,000 or less for an individual, or \$40,000 or less for a couple.	Receive a 30% to 40% discount on drugs made by GlaxoSmithKline at participating pharmacies.
Lilly Answers Card	Call 1-877-795-4559 toll-free to receive an application form, or visit their web site at: http://www.lillyanswers.com/en/index.html	Annual income \$18,000 or less for an individual or \$24,000 or less for a couple.	Pay only \$12 for each 30-day supply of a covered drug made by Lilly at participating pharmacies.

Program	Contact	Eligibility	Benefit
<p>Merck Patient Assistance Program</p>	<p>Patients can call toll-free 1-800-727-5400 (8AM–8PM EST, Mon.- Fri.) to obtain a brochure on the program and an enrollment application, or visit their web site at: http://www.merck.com/pap/pap/consumer/index.jsp to request an application online.</p> <p>The application must be completed by both the patient and his or her physician.</p> <p>Health care providers and their office staff, government, social service, or related agencies can call 1-800-994-2111 to obtain enrollment applications for patients and to request additional information.</p> <p>Health care providers and their office staff may request applications, brochures, and a display kit online by visiting their web site at http://www.merck.com/pap/pap/consumer/index.jsp</p>	<p>Enrollees must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Live in the U.S. and have a prescription for a Merck medicine from a doctor licensed in the U.S. Enrollees do not have to be U.S. citizens; 2. Not have insurance or other coverage for prescription medicines. Enrollees must exhaust all other insurance options for coverage prior to enrollment; and 3. Be unable to afford to pay for their medicine. Limits on annual income are: for an individual, \$18,000 or lower; for a couple, \$24,000 or lower; and for a family of four, \$35,000 or lower. If an enrollee's income is more than these amounts but special circumstances exist, their physician can request that an exception be made. 	<p>Most Merck products are included in this program. A partial list of Merck medicines provided through the program can be found on their web site at: http://www.merck.com/pap/pap/consumer/index.jsp.</p> <p>Medicines distributed through the Merck Patient Assistance Program are free of charge to all eligible patients.</p>

Program	Contact	Eligibility	Benefit
Pfizer Pfriends Card	Call toll-free 1-866-776-3700 to speak to a Customer Service Representative or visit their web site at http://www.pfizerhelpfulanswers.com/PfizerFriends.aspx	Anyone without prescription drug coverage is eligible, regardless of age or income. Even if you have medical insurance, but no prescription drug coverage, you can still qualify.	Save 15% to 50% on the retail cash price of Pfizer medicines at either participating retail pharmacies or through their prescriptions-by-mail program. Enrollment in the program is free.
Partnership for Prescription Assistance (PPARx) Program	Call toll-free 1-888-4PPA-NOW (1-888-477-2669) to speak to a Customer Service Representative or visit their web site at: http://www.pparx.org .	People who need help in obtaining medicines can visit the web site, answer a few questions online and receive a list of programs for which they may qualify.	If a patient qualifies for a program, a drug manufacturer will provide the drugs they need.
Together Rx Access™ Card Program (Ten drug companies offer savings through this program.)	Those who qualify (see box at right) can call 1-800-444-4106 to enroll, or visit the web site at: http://www.TogetherRxAccess.com . In addition to participating in the Together Rx Access™ Card Program, each of the 10 companies also offers a Patient Assistance Program (PAP). People applying to enroll for the Together Rx Access™ Card Program will be automatically notified if they may be eligible for further savings – and in some cases free medicines – through these PAPs.	Eligible persons are legal U.S. residents under age 65 who are otherwise not eligible for Medicare. They must be without public or private prescription drug coverage and have an income of up to \$30,000 for a single person or \$60,000 for a family of four. Income eligibility is adjusted for family size.	Receive a 20% to 40% discount (or more) on more than 275 drugs at participating pharmacies.

5. Regional & Membership Prescription Assistance Programs

Program	Contact	Eligibility	Benefit
Franklin Southampton Medication Assistance Program (MAP) – <i>Supported with grant funding from the Franklin Southampton Charities</i>	<p>MAP staff personnel help applicants complete and submit the necessary forms to apply to one or more prescription drug assistance programs.</p> <p>Franklin City Health Dept. 200 Fairview Dr Franklin, VA 23851 Phone: (757) 562-6109</p> <p>Ms. Ada Grimes Medication Assistant Phone: (757) 562-4338</p> <p>Ms. Janet Jackson MAP Coordinator Phone: (757) 562-2487</p>	<p>Applicants must live either in the City of Franklin or in Southampton County. There is no age limit for eligibility.</p> <p>An applicant's income must be within the limits set by the pharmaceutical company to which the applicant is applying.</p>	<p>Benefits vary according to the program to which the application is made.</p>
Medication Assistance Program for the Mount Rogers Planning District, operated by the District Three Governmental Cooperative (of which District Three Senior Services is a part.) Serves individuals in the counties of Bland, Carroll, Grayson, Smyth, Washington & Wythe, as well as the Cities of Bristol & Galax.	<p>Call 1-800-541-0933 for information and assistance, or e-mail them at district-three@smyth.net</p>	<p>Participation is based on individual or total family income. Individuals must not have any other prescription drug coverage. Prescriptions are limited to medications available through the Pharmacy Connect Program (see below).</p>	<p>Benefits vary according to the program to which the application is made.</p>

Program	Contact	Eligibility	Benefit
<p>Pharmacy Access Program (operated by the Appalachian Agency for Senior Citizens (AASC)) in Southwest Virginia</p>	<p>Call AASC at 1-800-656-2272 for information and assistance, or e-mail at aasc@aasc.org You can visit their web site at: http://www.aasc.org/</p> <p>Pharmacy Access provides assistance to citizens in applying to the drug companies that have prescription assistance programs. The agency may also refer individuals to the following facility:</p> <p>Tri-County Free Clinic 2331 West Front Street Richlands, VA 24641 Phone: (276) 963-8505</p>	<p>Serves persons age 60 or older who live in Buchanan, Dickenson, Russell and Tazewell counties.</p> <p>Individuals who are under 60 years of age are referred to the Pharmacy Connect program (see below.)</p>	<p>Same as above.</p>
<p>Pharmacy Central Program, operated by the Prince William Area Agency on Aging (PWAAA) & Northern Virginia Family Services (NVFS).</p>	<p>Call (703) 792-7662 for information and assistance. You can also e-mail them at: dvantiem@pwcgov.org or visit their web site at: http://www.pwcgov.org.</p> <p>The Pharmacy Central program is based on the Pharmacy Connect software produced by the Virginia Health Care Foundation (www.vhcf.org). Many pharmaceutical companies have patient assistance programs that assist eligible individuals in obtaining free or low-cost prescription medications. The Pharmacy Connect software includes information about the programs, their eligibility requirements and application forms.</p>	<p>Serves persons age 60 or older who live in Prince William County and the cities of Manassas & Manassas Park.</p>	<p>Same as above.</p>

Program	Contact	Eligibility	Benefit
Pharmacy Connect of Southwest Virginia Program (administered by Mountain Empire Older Citizens, Inc., in partnership with other agencies.)	Call MEOC at 1-800-252-6362 for assistance or referral to the Pharmacy Connect site nearest you. You can also contact MEOC by e-mail at: meoc@meoc.org or visit their web site at: http://www.meoc.org See above for information on the Pharmacy Connect software program.	Applicants must live in Buchanan, Dickenson, Lee, Russell, Scott, Tazewell or Wise counties or in the City of Norton. There is no age limit for eligibility.	Same as above.
Veterans Administration Prescription Assistance Program	Call 1-800-827-1000 for information and assistance, or visit their web site at: www.va.gov/elig	Must meet VA eligibility guidelines. A co-payment may be required.	Prescription and other drugs available under the VA national formulary.

Need Further Assistance?

Are you confused about what type of insurance you need, or whether you have enough insurance coverage? Are you having problems making sense of your medical bills? If so, insurance counseling is available through **the Virginia Insurance Counseling and Assistance Program (VICAP)**. VICAP counselors at your local Area Agency on Aging (AAA) can help you resolve claims or billing problems. They can also assist you with filing for benefits, and sorting through complicated statements and notices. Trained VICAP counselors in communities across the state provide **confidential** assistance to individuals in their area **free of charge**. VICAP counselors are not permitted to hold licenses to sell insurance. They are not permitted to recommend a particular insurance company. To get in touch with a VICAP counselor in your area, contact your local AAA or the Virginia Department for the Aging using the information shown below:



Virginia Department for the Aging

1610 Forest Avenue, Suite 100

Richmond, VA 23229

Toll-Free: 1-800-552-3402 (Nationwide Voice/TTY)

Richmond area: (804) 662-9333

Fax: (804) 662-9354

E-mail: aging@vda.virginia.gov

Web Site: <http://www.vda.virginia.gov>